Amendments to the Specification:

1. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 7, line 3 with the following rewritten paragraph:

A tub 30 is configured to fit within the housing 12. The tub 30 is preferably configured with rounded or octagonal walls and may be secured within the housing 12 by outward extending flanges 32~~a, 32b~~, tabs 34, or a combination thereof (as shown in FIG. 2), which seat the tub 30 against a stable portion of the housing 12, or preferably against upper elements 36~~a, 36b~~ of the support frame 28. The tub 30 can be securely affixed to the housing 12 or support frame 28 using conventional means known in the art, such as bolts, screws or weld points. In the preferred embodiment, the tub 30 has rounded sides and an open top and is formed of stainless steel. An ultrasound unit 38, comprising an ultrasound transducer and sensor, preferably engages the bottom 40 of the tub 30. An engagement means 66 secures the ultrasound unit 38 to the support frame 28, tub 30, or housing 12. The ultrasound unit 38 is connected by a cable (not shown) to an electronic power means (not shown) for supplying power to the ultrasound unit 38. The engagement means 66 may comprise tabs or metal flanges that are bolted or welded to the support frame 28, housing 12 or tub 30 to secure the ultrasound unit to the slat washer 10. Alternately, the ultrasound unit 38 may be attained to the slat washer 10 using suitable means known in the art, such as welding, adhesives, bolts or brackets.

2. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

With reference to FIGS. 3-5 and FIG. 8, the fixture assembly 42 is preferably cylindrical in overall shape and comprises a first and a second end disk 44a, 44b spaced apart by a shaft 46. The end disks 44a, 44b comprise a plurality of slots 48a, 48b along their respective perimeters 50a, 50b. The slots [[46]] 48a on the first end disk 44a preferably align with slots 48b on the second end disk 44b when the end disks 44a, 44b are properly seated on the shaft 46. The slots [[46]] 48a, 48b are configured to receive the distal ends 90a, 90b of individual slats 6 therein to secure the slats 6 on the fixture assembly 42.

3. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 8, line 12 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the preferred embodiment, the slots 48a on the first end disk 44a comprise an open side 4 and the slots 48b on the second end disk 44b comprise four closed sides 94. In the preferred embodiment, the slots 48a, 48b are angled from a center axis 8 of each respective end disk 44a, 44b so that the slats 6 can be securely seated on the fixture assembly 42 and will remain securely held, even when subject to vibrations from the ultrasound unit 38. In the preferred embodiment, the slots 48a, 48b are disposed at an approximately 30 to 60 degree angle from the center axis 8 of the respective end disks

44a, 44b. Preferably, the slats 6 are loaded onto the fixture assembly 42 by slipping one slot end 90b in the slots 48b of the second end disk 44b and an opposite slot ends 90a into the open side 4 of the slots 48a on the first end disk 44a. The open side 4 of each slot 48a on the first end disk 44a comprises a tab or hook element 2 (FIG. 8) to assist in securing each slat 6 on the fixture assembly 42, even when the ultrasound unit 38 is in operation or when the fixture assembly 42 rotates.

4. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 3 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the preferred embodiment, the hook element 2 comprises a substantially rectangular shape that approximates the dimensions of the slot 48b and comprises a top 76, a bottom section 78, two flat sides 80~~a, 80b~~, a front side 82a and a rear side 82b. The hook element 2, however, may be of other suitable shapes and dimensions. In the preferred embodiment, the top 76 of the hook element 2 is angled slightly towards either the right or left. A center indentation 86 in the hook element 2 defines a tab 84 adjacent the top 76 of the hook element 2 and the bottom section 78 of the hook element 2. In the preferred embodiment, the hook element 2 is adjustably attached at one of the closed sides 94 of the open-ended slots 48a. The hook element 2, however, may also be fixed to the end disk 44a or placed in other suitable locations in relation to the slots 48a. Alternately, the slats 6 may be seated on the fixture assembly without the use of the hook element 2.

5. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 15 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the preferred embodiment, one end 90a of an individual slat 6 is seated on one of the end disks 44a and the opposite en[[ ]]d 90b of the slat 6 is adjustably but securely seated in a slot 48 on the opposite end disk 44b by fitting the end 90b of the slat 6 in the center indentation 82 disposed in the hook element 2. In the preferred embodiment, the closed and open slot 48b, 48a arrangement and hook element 2 provides adjustable and secure placement of different size slats 6 onto the fixture assembly 42 for cleaning in the slat washer 10. The fixture assembly 42, however, may also comprise end disks 44a, 44b having alternate slot arrangements, such as all closed 48b or open 48a slots, on each end disk 44a, 44b. Alternately, each end disk 44a, 44b may comprise a combination of open-ended and closed slots 48a, 48b so that aligned slots 48a, 48b on opposite end disks 44a, 44b comprise one closed end slot 48b and one open-end slot 48a. For example, open and closed slots 48a, 48b may alternate on each end disk 44a, 44b.

6. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the preferred embodiment, one or both of the end disks 44a, 44b slidingly engage the shaft 46 to accommodate different length slats [[2]] 6 or other items.

Alternately, one or both end disks 44a, 44b may be fixed to the shaft 46. The shaft 46 preferably has flat sides 52, but may also have rounded sides. In the preferred embodiment, the shaft 46 comprises four flat sides that are approximately three inches in width each, and engages the end disk 44a by way of a recess block 56 that may be disposed on the inside face 58 of at least one of the end disks 44a or may be disposed in an opening in the end disk 44a to interface with the front and back face of the end disk 44a. One or both ends of the shaft 54a, 54b may sit in respective recess blocks 56 or similar structures, may protrude through the recess block 56, or they may fit through an opening in the disk 44b (not shown) to an outside face 60 of the end disk 44b. In an alternate embodiment, an opposite end of the shaft 54b may engage the opposite end disk 44b by way of a brace assembly 96 (FIG. 8). Alternately, the opposite end of the shaft 54b may engage the end disk 44b by other suitable means known in the art, such as welding, bolts brackets or adhesives.

7. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 10, line 5 with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the preferred embodiment, at least one, and preferably a pair of seating elements 62 engages the outside face 60 of the disk 44b and one of the shaft ends 54 so that the fixture assembly 42 rotatably engages with a complementary receiving element 64 disposed on the tub 30 or on the housing 12.

8. Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 11, line 3 with the following rewritten paragraph:

The fixture assembly 42, when seated in the tub 30 or housing 12, is configured so that there is a space between the walls 68 of the tub 30 and the fixture assembly 42 to permit rotation of the fixture assembly 42, even when loaded with slats [[2]] 6 or other items to be cleaned. When the fixture assembly 42 is removed from the housing 12 to load slats, the seating elements 62 may be fit onto the complementary receiving element 64 disposed on the housing 12 or tub 30 to seat the loaded fixture assembly 42 in the housing 12. Alternately, the fixture assembly 42 may be first seated into place in the housing 12 and the slats [[2]] 6 or other items loaded one-by-one by rotating the fixture assembly 42 as more slats [[2]] 6 are loaded. Once the operator has loaded the desired number of slats [[2]] 6, the access port lid 66 or the housing cover 18 is closed and the unit is powered, preferably by actuating a power switch [[76]] 11 on a control interface panel [[78]] 13. The ultrasound unit 38, once powered, imparts ultrasound energy to cleaning liquid in the tub 30, and the fixture assembly 42 preferably rotates the slats [[2]] 6 in the energized cleaning liquid. The slat washer 10 is preferably powered using 240 VAC, 3 phase power source, but may be powered by other suitable power sources. The slat washer 10 may be manually run, or can be configured to automatically rinse the slats [[2]] 6 with an optional second rinse cycle using a sterile or purified liquid, such as USP water. In the preferred embodiment, cleaning liquid from wash and rinse cycles drains by gravity. The slat washer 10 may, however, include

other suitable types of draining systems known in the art. The slat washer 10 may also include a drainage system comprising ball valves (not shown). The slats [[2]] 6 may then be dried during a drying cycle. In the preferred embodiment, forced warm air is blown over the slats [[2]] 6 from the warm air nozzles 68, while the fixture assembly 42 rotates. The forced air may be supplied to the slat washer by way of dryers that are disposed within an optional cabinet in the slat washer (not shown). The operator may then remove the cleaned and dried slats [[2]] 6 or other items by opening the access port lid 66 or housing cover 18 and by singly removing each slat [[2]] 6, or by removing the entire fixture assembly 42 from the slat washer 10. The invention allows the slats [[2]] 6 or other items to be placed into, cleaned and withdrawn from the slat washer 10, without having to touch the cleaning solution.